

## February 2021 Calendar of LWV Events

**Wed., Feb. 3, 1:30 p.m. — Book Club — *A Place for Us* by Fatima Farheen Mirza**

Virtual meeting.

If you are interested in joining Book Club contact Roz Shirack, [rozshirack7@gmail.com](mailto:rozshirack7@gmail.com).

**Mon., Feb. 8, 2 - 4 p.m. — Board meeting — via Zoom**

**Wed., Feb. 10, 6 - 8 p.m. — *Unhoused People in Marion & Polk Cos.***

Virtual meeting. Details below.

Panelists: Vanessa Nordyke, Salem City Councilor

Cathy Clark, Keizer Mayor



**Sat., Feb. 20, 1 p.m. — Great Decisions: *The End of Globalization?***

Home of Sally Hollemon, 3335 Crestview Dr. S (corner of Salem Heights)

Discussion leader: Patty Davenport

## ***Unhoused People in Marion & Polk Counties***

Our February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting will address the ongoing and ever visible issue of people who are unhoused. The efforts in our community are top-of-mind and ongoing. From 6 to 8 P.M. or so, via Zoom, we will hear from Salem City Councilor Vanessa Nordyke and Keizer Mayor Cathy Clark about progress made and plans for the future.

**Mayor Cathy Clark** is the Chairperson of the Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance, formerly known as the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Coalition. It is a large alliance composed of public officials and representatives of many nonprofits that work on issues of homelessness. **City Councilor Vanessa Nordyke** has been enthusiastically exploring and participating in efforts to assist the unsheltered. She posts frequent videos on her own and other group Facebook newsfeeds. Three other persons have been contacted and not yet confirmed their attendance. They are Kristin Retherford, Salem Urban Development Director; Stephanie Bobb, Resource Development Manager of The United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley; and Lynelle Wilcox, Program Manager of Safe Sleep United and Secretary of Coalition of Advocates for the Unsheltered of Salem.

Some of the progress we may hear about are in housing the unsheltered, the Coordinated Entry System, loans and grants, Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS), Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEADS), Community Response Unit (CRU) programs, SafeSleep United and more. There will be about fifteen minutes for questions at the end.

## Program Planning for 2021 - 2022 in LWVMPC

Sixteen League members met via Zoom and discussed our current positions. The group recommended that members vote at Annual Meeting on the following: (Details will be in the Annual Meeting Workbook, which will be sent to all members at least two weeks before May's Annual Meeting.)

- **Drop** the sections on Community Schools (since these haven't existed for years) and Manufactured Housing (since there is now state law covering it)
- **Approve** edits of other positions for clarity
- **Restudy** the pros and cons of an appointed sheriff versus an elected sheriff (which could be researched by one person or covered by a speaker at a League meeting). Volunteer?
- **New study** of "Health and Safety in Public Schools" suggested by one of our new members, Harmony Burrigot.

**A new study requires a study committee** of at least three or four members. If you are interested in helping research this topic, please volunteer to join the committee by contacting Diana Bodtker, Program Chair. We can't adopt a new study unless we have confirmed that we have a committee to do the research. It would be good to have committee members from several cities in Marion and Polk Counties as school districts will have different policies and practices.



### Proposed Study: Health and Safety in Public Schools

**Scope: What are the biggest threats to the health and safety of students? Where are resources allocated? Are they aimed at the biggest threats? What are alternatives?**

Understanding the current allocation of resources (funding and staff) to policing versus other social services, understanding the need/desire for police in schools as well as the drawbacks of having police in schools, understand the highest needs within schools regarding public health and safety, researching other successful models to address high priority public health and safety needs that may be alternatives to police in schools. The prevailing interest is in aligning community investments in public health and safety with community interests. It would be interesting to hear from the Latinos Unidos Siempre, as well as School Resource Officers and juvenile corrections officers.

Questions that the study committee might decide to consider: What is a School Resource Officer responsible for? What is Restorative Justice? Which programs are most effective? What gaps do schools help to fill? How to prevent school shootings? How to prevent bullying? What happens in various school districts in Marion & Polk Counties (not just in Salem-Keizer Schools)?

**Making Democracy Work™**

### **FOCUS**

*Focus* is the newsletter of the League of Women Voters® of Marion and Polk Counties. Members subscribe through their dues, and membership is open to anyone 16 years of age and older.

# Our Revitalized Observer Corps

Amy Vandegrift

Our Unit Meeting on January 13th introduced our revitalized Observer Corps program. Eighteen members attended; a few volunteered to be an observer. We need more observers. Following is the information from our January meeting. Please consider observing your city council or school board or county commission or special district.

## Become an LWVMPC Observer of our local government

Our right to know what is happening in our government protects our democracy and keeps it healthy. Our government should be open and transparent.

Over the past several years our local news organizations have cut back their local reporting. They no longer have dedicated reporters attend the regular government meetings. A reporter may attend one if there is a controversial issue. LWV knows that the actions of our local officials need to be monitored. We want to fill the void and rebuild our LWVMPC Observer Corps.

“Observers keep elected and appointed officials on notice; they let them know that someone is watching what decisions are being made and how they are being made. They help ensure that the issues facing their community are being handled “in the sunshine,” in the open.... Decisions that determine how our schools will be run, at what level community safety programs will be funded, and how land in our towns will be used impact our lives and are vital to our well-being. These kinds of decisions need to be made with public input and oversight.” — *Observing Your Government in Action*

## Protecting Your Right to Know from LWVUS *Observing Your Government in Action*

For 100 years the League of Women Voters observers have protected our right to know what our government officials were doing and held them accountable for what they said and did. LWV observers also promote civic engagement, connect elected official with the LWV and our goals, and educate the public.

An observer is an individual who attends a governmental meeting, notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League and the community. By attending public meetings of local governmental bodies/agencies, observers learn more about what their government is doing. They learn about the issues facing their community and are empowered to take action, if warranted. They also learn how issues are being addressed. Observer programs are not vehicles for individuals to work personal or partisan agendas. Observers generally do not “act” on issues in these meetings unless they are serving as a designated spokesperson for the League,

Both Deanie Anderson and Jean Sherbeck have been LWV observers and offered important **tips and information about being an Observer:**

Sign up for notification of the committee’s meeting and agenda that is also the group’s website.

Many meetings are currently done on a web platform such as Zoom or local cable access.

When the meeting is in person or held by Zoom so that you are visible to the board members, introduce yourself as a LWV observer to the chair and group. Wear your LWV pin (let us know if you need one); it will also show on a Zoom call.

Watch, take notes, and gather information. Do not speak or make comments; your role is as a watchdog.

Compile your notes and complete the LWVMPC form that is available on LWVMPC website shortly after the meeting while information is still fresh in your mind.

Consider having a partner with which to take turns viewing meetings. (Continued on next page)

## Tips on being an Observer (Continued from Page 3)

From her experience Jean also shared that observers listen to the ordinary business of the committee/commission/council that include reports from staff, reports on actions taken on behalf of the government, and other governmental organizations that they work with. Some meetings are more informal than others. Occasionally there are private persons or entities that make presentations and public hearings on issues. There is always something interesting to learn, and she often comes away with the feeling that things are going well. Most of the time she is the only citizen in the audience. Because of the informality of some meetings, a couple times she was permitted to ask a question of a visiting presenter. She enjoys seeing the interweaving of the functions of each entity as everything works together.

**The Observer Corp committee has put information on our LWVMPC website: <https://leaguwomenvotersmarionpolk.org/>.** At the top of the page, click on Interest Groups and scroll down the page to Observers. There is a link to our Observer form that can be filled out online as well as suggested committee/commission/councils that need observation, information on how to access their meetings, and the Oregon Sunshine laws.

This is a perfect way for you, an individual Leaguer, to participate and track a current subject that interests you while learning more about our local government structure and operations. Currently observers can use virtual technology to find the meeting times, and agendas, and attend meetings. Observer Reports will be compiled and printed monthly in the *Focus*. If you cannot participate full time perhaps you could be a substitute for others or “job share.”

**HOW TO BECOME an Observer:** Contact Amy Vandegrift or Alice LaViolette to let them know which committee you want to observe and to answer any additional questions you might have. If your preferred committee is not listed, it can be added to the LWVMPC list and you can keep all of us informed. Our LWV board will send a letter on your behalf to the committee chair letting them know you are a regular LWV Observer.

**Be an LWVMPC Observer—Sign up now while you are thinking about it!**



## Observer Corps January 2021 Reports



### City of Salem Urban Renewal Agency (1/25/21) *Alice LaViolette, Observer*

Six short-term bonds for Urban Renewal Areas were voted on by consent agenda. It was explained that the city cannot spend TIF\* funds directly; instead they must go through a debt instrument. The approval of these bonds will allow the city to move forward on additional Urban Renewal Area projects.

\*Tax Increment Financing creates funding for identified projects without raising taxes.

(Continued on next page)

## City of Salem Urban Renewal Agency (Continued from Page 4)

The approved bonds were: McGilchrist URA\* not to exceed \$900,000; Mill Creek Industrial Park URA not to exceed \$500,000; North Gateway URA not to exceed \$4,500,000; Riverfront-Downtown URA not to exceed \$6,000,000; South Waterfront URA not to exceed \$500,000; West Salem URA not to exceed \$2,000,000. \*URA=Urban Renewal Area

There was no discussion of what specific projects the bonds would fund.

## Salem Area Mass Transit District (Cherriots) Board of Directors (1/28/21)

Janet Adkins, Observer



The main points of discussion were

1. The upcoming 2021 State and Federal legislative agenda with CFM Advocates (the district's hired representatives in Salem and Washington, DC) was approved. The federal program includes increasing transit bus and facility funding, COVID emergency funding, and extension of Alternative Fuels Tax Credits. The state program includes protecting transit funding; HB 3056, Issuance of Clean Fuels Credits; and SB 395, increased funding for pedestrian and bike paths.
2. The Transit District's proposed Plan for its grant application under the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund was approved.

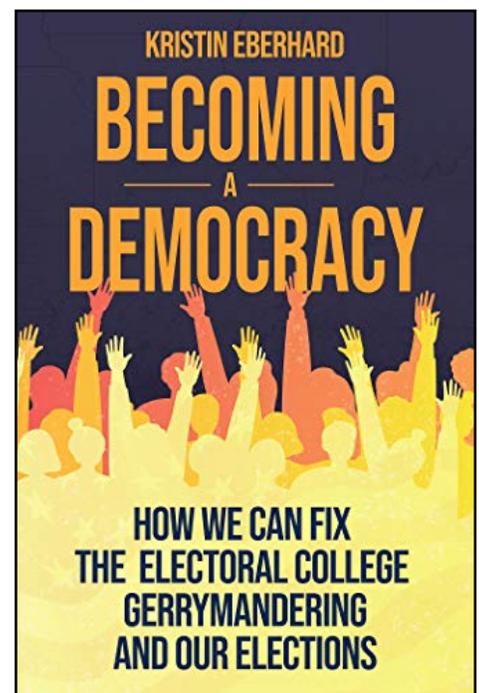
## March 17: LWVMPC READS *Becoming a Democracy*

Diana Bodtke, Program Chair

A great book was recently published that your board thinks will make a great group read for March, followed by a Zoom discussion. The book is *Becoming a Democracy: How We Can Fix the Electoral College, Gerrymandering and Our Elections* by Kristen Eberhard. Eberhard is the Director of Climate and Democracy at Sightline Institute and is a lawyer by training. She is an expert on electoral reform, vote by mail and the inconsistency of states' election rules.

The book is currently in short supply but we have purchased several from Powell's Books to pass around. The paperback is going into reprint and should be available soon through Powell's or Amazon. It is currently available on Kindle for \$7.49. Unfortunately, The Book Bin does not carry it.

If you have any questions or want to get on the list to read the copies that are currently available, contact Diana Bodtke.



## Membership

*Elsa Struble, Data*

### Welcome New Members!

Harmony Burrigh

Cindy Schnelle

**Shandra Lee White Harris**

Shandra transferred from the LWV of Umpqua Valley.

## New LWVMPC Webpage

Alice LaViolette has put together a new webpage for our local League. One section is titled *League Library* and includes LWVMPC study reports as well as other articles published in the *Focus* over the years. There's some interesting stuff there. Take a look!

**[LWVmarionpolk.org](http://LWVmarionpolk.org)**

## Voter Service—Legislative interviews

*Deanie Anderson, Voter Service Co-chair*

In coordination with LWVOR, we are participating in legislative interviews. The purpose is to introduce our presence to the legislators and get a sense of their prime areas of action. Cindy Burgess and Amy Vandergriff are interviewing Senator Deb Patterson and Representative Raquel Moore-Green. Roz Shirack and Alice Phalan are interviewing Representative Brian Clem and Senator Peter Courtney. Mary Holden is interviewing Representative Paul Evans.

## LWVMPC Board 2020-2021

**President:** Vacant

**Secretary:** Jean Sherbeck

**Treasurer:** Elsa Struble

**Assistant Treasurer and Webpage:**  
Alice LaViolette

**Membership:**  
Amy Vandegriff

**Program:** Diana Bodtker

**Publicity and Facebook:** Cindy Burgess,

**Voter Education Co-chair:** Kathleen West

**Action Chair:** A volunteer would be welcomed.

### Off-Board Chairs

**Voter Education Co-chair:** Deanie Anderson,

**VOTE411.org data entry:** Janet Adkins,

### Focus

**Editor:** Sally Hollemon,

**Circulation:** Elsa Struble

**Proofreader:** Donna Briney

**Nominating Committee:**

Volunteers would be welcomed.

**LWVMPC has a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVMarionPolk/>**

**League of Women Voters of Marion and Polk Counties**  
**Membership through September 30, 2021**

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to all women and men 16 years of age and older.

Membership includes subscriptions to local, state, and national League publications, many of which are sent by e-mail and all of which are supported by your local dues.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Renewing members**, please add below any information that is different from what's in the 2019-20 directory. If you've mislaid your directory, contact Elsa Struble at [gstruble@willamette.edu](mailto:gstruble@willamette.edu), 364-3929.

**New members**, please complete the following contact information.

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I want to join the League: \_\_\_\_\_ as a *new* member. \_\_\_\_\_ as a renewing member

I am enclosing:

\_\_\_ \$ 65 for Individual Membership

\_\_\_ \$ 30 for each additional Household Member, Student or Limited Income Member

(Those with limited income may also contact Amy Vandegrift or Elsa Struble about scholarships)

\_\_\_ \$ 90 for a single Supporting Member

\_\_\_ **\$15 extra to receive printed newsletters through the mail**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Contribution to LWVMPC budget (not tax deductible)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **TOTAL to LWVMPC** (not tax deductible)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Contributions to LWV of Oregon are now tax deductible. Write a separate check payable to LWVOR and *send it to* Treasurer Elsa Struble; she will forward it to the state League and the amount will be held for us to use for our educational projects or per-member payments owed the state League. (Checks sent to the LWVOR office will not benefit our local League but directly benefit the state League, another good cause.)

**Mail check(s) & form** to Treasurer Elsa Struble, 210 18th St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

For further member information, contact Amy Vandegrift at 503-364-0492, [vandebloom@gmail.com](mailto:vandebloom@gmail.com)  
or Elsa Struble at 503-364-3929, [gstruble@willamette.edu](mailto:gstruble@willamette.edu)

**Join online HERE.**



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
of Marion and Polk Counties**

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The League of Women Voters®, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

**February 2021**

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